



2026 Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate Name: Mansoor Shams

Position: County Executive

What urban planning model examples do you admire and would seek to adapt in Baltimore County? If your vision includes increasing the offer of “third places” (public gathering spaces), please include the actions you would take.

"The urban planning concept I most admire is the Chicago School theory of the city. It recognizes that communities evolve through transitional stages and that successful planning requires understanding the social, economic, and physical factors shaping our neighborhoods. Growth should not be something that simply happens to communities—it should be something communities actively shape.

As County Executive, I would bring together residents, planners, businesses, and community organizations to ensure development reflects the needs of the people who live there. By bringing all stakeholders to the table, we can reclaim and co-create spaces that strengthen neighborhoods rather than simply react to development pressures.

Part of that vision includes expanding “third places”—public spaces outside of home and work where people can gather, connect, and build community. Baltimore County already has incredible assets in our libraries, parks, and recreation centers, and I would look for ways to expand their role as community hubs. This could include adding more programming, community services, small community markets, and public events that bring people together.

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What concrete steps will you take to address the acute shortage of affordable housing in Baltimore County and what other measures would you take to encourage population retention and increase?

"Baltimore County’s housing affordability crisis is one of the biggest challenges facing working families today. My approach focuses on both increasing access to housing and ensuring the people who work here can afford to live here.

First, I will implement a “Live Where You Work” initiative that helps essential workers—such as teachers, first responders, healthcare workers, and county employees—afford housing in the communities they serve. When the people who educate our children, protect our



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neighborhoods, and care for our families can live locally, it strengthens both our workforce and our communities.

Second, I will work with the County Council to address speculative bulk home ownership that is pricing families out of the market. We need policies that ensure housing remains accessible to residents rather than being treated purely as an investment vehicle.

Third, through our Home Stabilizing Fund, we will provide targeted financial support to lower- and middle-income households earning under \$75,000 who are struggling with rising housing costs. Stabilizing families helps prevent displacement and keeps communities intact.

Finally, increasing population retention and growth means making Baltimore County a place where people want to stay. That means safe communities, strong schools, affordable housing, and a government that respects people's time and dignity. When families can afford to live here and see opportunity here, they choose to build their future here."

What resources are under-utilized in our County that could be used to increase economic growth?

"One of the most underutilized resources in Baltimore County is the infrastructure we already own. Across the county we have recreation centers, libraries, and other public buildings that could be used more creatively to strengthen our local economy and support working families.

For example, my campaign has proposed using existing county facilities to host small "Community Mini Marts." These would offer a limited number of high-cost necessities—about twenty essential items such as baby formula, diapers, and basic hygiene products—at reduced cost for residents. These would not compete with supermarkets but instead supplement them, especially in areas where grocery stores have left the market. By placing these mini marts within walking distance of many neighborhoods, we can help families stretch their budgets while strengthening community access to basic necessities.

Our library system is another incredible resource that can do even more. Programs like "Lawyer in the Library" and "Nurse in the Library," which exist in many places across the country, could



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be expanded in Baltimore County to provide residents with guidance on financial planning, health education, and other services that help families reduce costs and live healthier lives.

Economic growth is not just about attracting new development—it is also about making better use of the resources we already have to strengthen families, stabilize communities, and create opportunity. When government works creatively and efficiently, we can improve quality of life while supporting long-term economic growth.”

What law enforcement issues do you see as the biggest challenge in the County and how would you protect County residents from ICE raids?

"One of the biggest law enforcement challenges facing Baltimore County is maintaining strong public safety while also preserving trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve. Public safety is strongest when residents feel safe reporting crimes, cooperating with police, and participating fully in community life.

I strongly support our Baltimore County Police Department and all uniformed officers who work every day to serve our communities and keep our neighborhoods safe. I have personally witnessed the immense effort our police officers put into building relationships and trust within our communities, and we cannot allow that progress to be undone. Our local police are here to protect and serve our residents—not to carry out federal immigration enforcement. ICE is not the police, and the police are not ICE.

I support Governor Moore’s decision to eliminate 287(g) agreements in Maryland because local law enforcement should remain focused on local public safety responsibilities. Officers should be able to do their jobs without creating fear that discourages members of our community from seeking help when they need it.

At the same time, I am opposed to the presence of DHS operations in our communities that involve masks, camouflage, and military-style tactics. As County Executive, I would seek ways to ensure safety and stability in places of refuge such as schools, hospitals, and houses of worship so families can access essential services without fear.



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I would also work closely with the Baltimore County Immigrant Affairs Commission and community partners to strengthen support for immigrant families and businesses, including access to healthcare, safe housing, and safe job sites. Baltimore County must remain a place where public safety and human dignity go hand in hand—where law enforcement can effectively protect our communities and every resident feels safe contributing to the life of our county.”

Much is talked about protecting "mom and pop" businesses; in Baltimore County, however, big chains prevail. What is your vision and plan to address this?

"Mom-and-pop businesses are the backbone of many of our neighborhoods, yet too often they are overshadowed by large chains. At the same time, we are seeing supermarkets close in many areas while large retailers move to distant parts of the county that are only accessible by car. That reality makes it even more important that we recognize, support, and honor the role local businesses play in providing accessible goods and services to our communities.

As County Executive, I would work to include small and locally owned businesses more directly in our county planning process—particularly in neighborhoods experiencing transitional growth and change. By bringing these businesses to the table, we can ensure residents continue to have access to affordable necessities within their own communities.

I would also focus on removing unnecessary barriers that make it difficult for entrepreneurs to start or expand a business in Baltimore County. Too often, endless paperwork, confusing regulations, and slow processes discourage people from opening or growing a small business. My administration would review permitting, licensing, and regulatory requirements to streamline the process and make it easier to do business in Baltimore County.

Just as importantly, we must make it easier for residents and business owners to do business with the county itself. That means modernizing our website, improving communication channels, and creating a simpler, more transparent process for permits, applications, and services.”